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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father God, use our lawmakers today as Your instruments. Give them Your wisdom so that they can find solutions to the complex problems that beset our Nation. Strengthen them to serve and honor You by helping the oppressed. Keep them from fear and frustration as You equip and empower them to accomplish Your will on Earth.

May they find Your guidance throughout this day by seeking You in personal prayer. When they call, answer their petitions with Your mighty power and guard those who put their trust in You. Replenish their resources with Your peace that passes understanding.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 10, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to be in a period of morning business for an hour. The majority will control the second half of morning business, the Republicans will control the first half of morning business. We had a conversation last night, the distinguished Republican leader and I, and the decision was made at that time that we are going to do our very best on the Webb amendment to come up with a side by side so we can have, sometime today, votes on those two amendments. Following that, there will be another amendment offered, and we will move along on this most important piece of legislation.

WESTERN WILDFIRES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I know we have so many important things to do dealing with this legislation, but I do wish to say something about what is going on in Nevada. We have a serious problem in Nevada, and it is fires. This is about the fourth year we have had these raging wildfires.

It is so difficult. The smoke is so thick, helicopters cannot fly. Firefighters have been lost not knowing where they are fighting these fires. It is rough terrain. What people do not understand is, Nevada—other than

Alaska—is the most mountainous State in the Union. It has 314 separate mountain ranges. We have 32 mountains over 11,000 feet high. Some of this terrain, where these fires are burning, is very difficult.

We share Lake Tahoe with California. There was a raging fire there that lasted 2 weeks. It has now been put out. But they think that at least 400 structures have burned, with 275 or 300 homes burned to the ground.

On a lot of the land in Nevada not many people live there. In spite of that, people do live there. It is rural, and fires have been raging. What has happened with the fires that have taken place in the past, we have these species that are foreign to the high deserts of Nevada. They start burning, they get into the low mountains, they get into the cedars and the pines and then start burning in the forests. That is what has happened in Nevada.

In one fire we have had three lives lost. This fire burned so quickly that three grown men could not escape the fire. They were doing work on their farm. There was an 11-year-old boy. They saw the fire coming. They said, "Run for your life," literally, and the 11-year-old boy ran and did survive. His family did not. They all died—three of them.

I say this because we have shut down roads. In one part of Utah, 100 miles of interstate were closed because of fires. Think about that: 100 miles of interstate closed. People could not go. One reason was the smoke was so thick—not the fire, the smoke.

There has been remarkable heroism, as there always is with these men and women who fight these raging fires.

I quoted, a couple weeks ago, Edward Croker, a long past fire chief in the State of New York, who said:

I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a fireman. Our proudest moment is to save lives. Under the impulse of such thoughts, the nobility of the occupation thrills us and stimulates us to deeds of daring, even of supreme sacrifice.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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